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Freight planning in an uncertain world

A summary report of the 11th annual Freight and Logistics Symposium, held November 30, 2007, is now available. The symposium was sponsored by CTS, in cooperation with Mn/DOT, the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee, the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals Twin Cities Roundtable, the Metropolitan Council, and the Transportation Club of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

This year's symposium addressed planning adequately for tomorrow's transportation infrastructure in today's uncertain world. An increasingly global economy, shifting trade patterns, and population growth in the face of already strained local and national resources—and an aging transportation infrastructure—all contribute to the challenge.

In the keynote speech, Richard Stewart presented an overview of changes in technology and transportation during the last 40 years and shared thoughts for the future. Stewart, director of the Transportation and Logistics Research Center at the University of Wisconsin–Superior, pointed out the considerable challenges posed by capacity, congestion, and the cost to upgrade and construct new transportation infrastructure. “Lack of a national transportation policy creates difficulties for us because we [as a nation] lack vision of where we want to be in 10 to 20 years,” Stewart told the audience of freight and logistics professionals, policymakers, and researchers.

In addition, Stewart said, explosive world population and economic growth, especially in China, India, and Indonesia, will continue to deplete global energy resources and trigger further shifts in trade patterns. Stewart predicts rising energy costs will force changes in transportation, including a reversal toward more regionalized distribution to offset fuel costs and congestion delays.

Next, a panel discussion focused on current challenges to the freight industry, moderated by Richard Murphy, president of Murphy Warehouse Company and former chair of the CTS Executive Committee. Leslie Blakey, executive director of the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, said the United States needs to broaden its perspective as China and other nations bolster their economic prowess.

At the state level, David Christianson, an associate with SRF Consulting Group, discussed the impact on local transportation infrastructure from regional efforts to accommodate trade and economic growth. Jerry Fruin, associate professor of applied economics at the University of Minnesota, talked about the effects of biofuels on the economy and infrastructure. Catherine Petersen of CJ Petersen & Associates addressed Minnesota's growing role in the global economy. Petersen called for better information sharing to speed the movement of goods as well as a national database to measure U.S. logistics performance more accurately.

A second panel, moderated by Bill Gardner, transportation planning director at the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), explored public policy alternatives for meeting freight industry challenges. Mike Wagner, director of public works and county engineer for Nicollet County, said lack of state funding has forced the need to issue bonds for road enhancements, while lack of county resources prevents enforcement of weight limits on county roads.

Adolph Ojard, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, outlined developments at the rapidly growing port. A number of world developments have made the Duluth port a dynamic one, including wind turbine component shipments. Blakey, also in this panel, noted that the nearly depleted Highway Trust Fund and inflationary effects on older tax programs beg the need for more public-private partnerships to fund transportation projects.

A copy of the proceedings is being mailed to symposium attendees and most recipients of this electronic newsletter. If you do not receive one or need additional copies, please visit the CTS publications page at www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/proceedings/ for a PDF version, or contact CTS (cts@umn.edu or 612-626-1077).

***Freight Performance Measure Systems (FPMS) System Evaluation and Data Analysis* report published**

In January, CTS published *Freight Performance Measure Systems (FPMS) System Evaluation and Data Analysis* ([Report no. CTS 08-01](#)) (523 KB PDF). The report, written by Minnesota Traffic Observatory senior systems engineer Chen-Fu Liao and sponsored by the American Trucking Research Institute, documents the findings and analysis of the ATRI Freight Performance Measure (FPM) database systems and investigates a potential FPM system design that can efficiently and effectively process more and larger Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) datasets collected from various trucking companies. One of the key measures of freight performance along interstate corridors in the United States is the average speed of travel. The current FPM system at ATRI was evolved from its previous system based on GIS software. The average speed calculations resulting from the data process of each FPM system are somewhat different. Analysis of the average speed calculation and investigation of speed differences are discussed in chapter one. FPM database system analysis and comparison are included in chapter two. The final chapter presents an ideal FPM system and requirements needed for migration.

Recently published freight-related research from TRB

The new [Guidebook for Integrating Freight into Transportation Planning and Project Selection Processes](#) (4.3 MB PDF) has been published by the NCHRP and is now available. The report (#594) explores a framework for incorporating freight needs for all modes into transportation planning and priority programming by state, regional, metropolitan, local, and special transportation agencies. The report covers technical issues, organizational suggestions, and communication requirements of freight planning and programming. A project final report that describes the case studies used to help develop the guidebook and other resources used in the guidebook is available as [NCHRP Web-Only Document 112](#).

TRB's [National Cooperative Highway Research Program \(NCHRP\) Report 586: Rail Freight Solutions to Roadway Congestion—Final Report and Guidebook](#) (6.7 MB PDF) explores guidance on evaluating the potential feasibility, cost, and benefits of investing in rail freight solutions to alleviate highway congestion from heavy truck traffic.

TRB's [Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program \(CTBSSP\) Research Results Digest 6: A Status Report](#) (80 KB PDF) describes the progress and status of the [Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program \(CTBSSP\)](#). CTBSSP is a cooperative research program sponsored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and administered by the Transportation Research Board. The program was authorized in late 2001 and began in 2002 in support of the FMCSA's safety research programs.

U of M supply-chain management program scheduled for November 2008

The Carlson Executive Development Center at the University of Minnesota is hosting a 2–1/2-day program on supply-chain management from **November 18 to 20, 2008**. Participants will examine the latest challenges facing supply chains in light of increased globalization and security concerns, industry consolidation, and rising customer expectations. Faculty experts in inventory and distribution management, strategic sourcing, and technology management draw from the latest supply chain research and best practices to develop an exciting and timely curriculum.

The program fee of \$3,000 includes tuition, program materials, coffee breaks, and lunches. For more information on the [Supply Chain Management program](#) or to register online, visit the [Carlson Executive Development Center Web site](#). E-mail: edc@carlsonschool.umn.edu, or call 612-624-2545 or 800-388-3863.

Transportation Club Expo 2008 scheduled for April 7, 2008

The Transportation Club Luncheon and Expo 2008 will be held on April 7, 2008, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, 7800 Normandale Blvd (at Hwy 100 and I-494), Bloomington, Minnesota. Luncheon speaker: Steven John Anderson, Administrator, Greater Metropolitan Foreign Trade Zone Commission. Luncheon cost: \$45 Club members/guests, \$55 nonmembers. The Expo, the largest transportation exhibition in the United States with more than 80 exhibitors, follows the luncheon at 1 p.m., and it's free. To register or for more information, please visit www.transportationclub.com/expo.htm, or contact the Transportation Club at 952-239-1226 or office@transportationclub.com.

FHWA 'Talking Freight' seminars

Upcoming topics and dates for the "Talking Freight" online seminars from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are listed here. See the [Talking Freight Web site](#) for further details.

March 19, 2008 Tolling and Pricing 1:00 pm - 2:30 p.m. EST

Comments

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